DECISION RECORD
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. ID-410-2008-EA-179

ALICE CONSOLIDATED MINING COMPANY, IDI-35699

DECISION:

It is my decision that a road right-of-way be granted to Alice Consolidated Mining Company (BLM serial number IDI-35699) to use for access to their private property. The terms of the grant will expire on December 31, 2010 with no renewal option. The following lands are affected:

Boise Meridian,
T. 48 N., R. 5 E.,
section 21 SW¼SW¼, tract 105;
section 28 lot 17.

The grant will be made under the authority of Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761) and is subject to the terms and conditions in 43 CFR 2800 and rental payments as determined by 43 CFR 2806. The grant is also subject to the mitigations set forth in the application.

In addition to rental fees, Alice Consolidated Mining Company shall pay $186 to a BLM fund established for control of noxious weeds.

The newly constructed road shall have an adverse grade of about 8% and a running surface of 14 feet. The road shall be half-benched with a distance from top-of-cut to the bottom-of-fill of approximately 60 feet.

At the conclusion of hauling activities the new spur road will be pulled back to slope and revegetated with the seed mixture specified in Exhibit B.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the Environmental Assessment, ID-410-2008-EA-179 dated August 26, 2008, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant. An environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed action.

RATIONALE:

There are no pending or authorized lands actions or mining claims which might conflict with this proposed action.

The action is in conformance with the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved June 2007, as stated in Objective LR-1.1, Action LR-1.1.3.

/s/ *Eric R. Thomson* 9/5/2008

Authorized Officer Date

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

I. Introduction

EA Number: ID-410-2008-EA-179
Title of Action: Alice Consolidated Road Right-of-Way
Location: T. 48 N., R. 5 E., section 21 SW¼SW¼, tract 105; section 28 lot 17.
Case file No.: IDI-35699
BLM Office: Coeur d'Alene Field Office
Date of Preparation: August 26, 2008
Applicant: Alice Consolidated Mining Company

Background: Alice Consolidated Mining Company, a private corporation, has applied to use an existing road and construct a segment of new road across public land to haul timber.

Type of Action: The existing road right-of-way (ROW) would be approximately 1,000 feet long by 14 feet wide. The new road would be 410 feet long by 14 feet wide. See attached map, Exhibit A.

Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action: The purpose and need of the proposed action is to access Alice Consolidated Company's private property to haul approximately 300 MBF of timber.

II. Proposed Action and Alternative

Proposed Action, Alternative 1:
The proposed action is to grant Alice Consolidated Company a ROW to use approximately 1,000 feet of existing road and construct approximately 410 feet of temporary spur road across public land. The proposed action is on land that is mountainous, timbered, and contains 45-50% slopes.

The road would be half-benched, with a distance from top-of-cut to the bottom-of-fill of about 50 feet. The new road would have an 8% adverse grade and a running surface of 14 feet. The road would be constructed with standard heavy equipment including a bulldozer and excavator. The total acreage contained in the new and existing roads would be approximately 1.24 acre. The requested term of the ROW is 2 years. All appropriate fees including weed fees would be paid by the applicant prior to the ROW being granted. Alice Consolidated Company would purchase any merchantable timber within the ROW area.

No Action Alternative, Alternative 2:
The right-of-way would not be granted; timber could not be harvested; the existing insect damage would not be addressed.

Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail:
None.

III. Conformance

Conformance with Land Use Plan: The proposed action is in conformance with the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan dated June 2007, Objective LR-1.1, Action LR-1.1.3.

Conformance with Other Plans, Regulations, etc: This application is filed pursuant to Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The grant would be governed by the regulations contained in 43 CFR 2800 as well as Bureau Manual 2800.

IV. Affected Environment

General Setting - The area of the proposed action lies approximately 1 air mile northwest of Mullan, Idaho. The elevation of the proposed action area is between 4,000' and 5,100' above sea level. The general terrain is mountainous timberland. The proposed new construction area lies on a south-east facing slope. It is forested with Douglas fir and occasional grand fir. The general area in which this ROW grant is proposed has been heavily impacted by past mining practices. Numerous old roads, some still in use and some overgrown, dot the landscape along with adits and waste rock piles.

A. Soils
   Soils within the project area are classified as Latour-Rubble land association. They consist of gravelly silt loam in the upper 18 inches and extremely cobbly silt loam below that (USDA, Soil Survey of St. Joe Area, Parts of Benewah and Shoshone Counties, Idaho. 1992). Rock content increases with depth. The soil is very deep, well-drained and moderately permeable. Erosion potential is classified as moderate.

B. Water Resources, including Water Quality
   Watershed setting: The proposed action is a located almost entirely within the Grouse Creek watershed. This watershed is heavily forested with a contributing drainage area of approximately 2.2 square miles. Mean annual precipitation in the watershed is 37 inches. The elevation ranges from about 2700 feet at its confluence with the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River up to 6177 feet at West Grouse Peak. The watershed has been very heavily impacted by mining, road construction, timber harvest and wildfire. The proposed new road construction is situated on a straight to convex- shaped, southeast facing slope. Distance to Grouse Creek is about 1600 feet.

The proposed new road construction extends from between 5100 to 5200 ft elevation. Mean annual precipitation at this elevation is about 50 inches. From a slope stability standpoint, the site appears to be stable for the proposed activity. Rocks are present throughout the area. Fir trees in the vicinity show no evidence of leaning and no active erosional scarps, (suggesting soil creep or mass movement) were observed during a field investigation.

C. Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species

Vegetation Communities. Vegetation within and adjacent to the action area has been disturbed by road-building and use; mining; timber harvest; insect and fire activity. Plant communities along the route consist of a mosaic of herb-dominated areas; shrub patches; groups of young and medium-aged conifers; and mature trees.

Threatened and Endangered Species. No water howellia (threatened) or Spalding's catchfly (threatened) plants or habitat are present in the action area.

BLM Sensitive Species. No clustered lady's-slipper or other moonwort plants or habitat (both BLM Sensitive) have been found in the action area. No bank monkeyflower (BLM Watch) plants or habitat occur in the action area.

Invasive, Non-native Species. Spotted knapweed (noxious), ox-eye daisy (noxious), meadow hawkweed (noxious), Canada thistle (noxious), Dalmatian toadflax (noxious), yellow toadflax (noxious), common St. John's-wort, bull thistle, and common tansy are found at various points along the main access road. Spotted knapweed and common St. John's-wort occur where the new road would be built on BLM land.

D. Fisheries

The location of the proposed action is within the Grouse Gulch watershed, which drains into the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. Grouse Gulch may contain westslope cutthroat trout, *Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*, a BLM sensitive species. The South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River is known to contain westslope cutthroat trout, as well as rainbow, *O. mykiss*, brook trout, *Salvelinus fontinalis*, and mountain whitefish, *Prosopium williamsoni*. Historically, bull trout, *S. confluentus*, federally listed as threatened, used the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River but are no longer found in the area.

E. Wildlife

Twenty-four or more different species of wildlife may inhabit the proposed action area. Gray wolves and mountain lions may occasionally follow the deer and elk during the summer season. Fourteen or more different species of migratory birds may also inhabit the proposed action area.

F. Threatened, Endangered, and other Special Status Wildlife Species

The Fish and Wildlife Service provided a species list (1-9-08-SP-0068) dated 9 April 2008. No wildlife species on this list are likely to inhabit the proposed action area.

Four sensitive, three watch, and one state-listed species may inhabit the proposed action area.

G. Cultural Resources
There are no known cultural resources present in the action area.

H. Visual Resources
The parcel is located within a Class III Visual Resource Management area. Modifications to the landscape are allowed in these areas as long as changes do not dominate the visual character of the landscape.

I. Recreation
The area is an isolated parcel of public land that likely receives only occasional dispersed recreation use.

V. Environmental Effects

A. Soils
There will be a short-term loss of soil productivity associated with the proposed action due primarily to the initial construction of the road. Soil impacts would recover when the road is obliterated after two years.

Cumulative Effects – Water and Soil

The cumulative effects will be similar for the proposed action and the no-action alternative (Alt 2) due to the relatively small area of disturbance involved in the proposed action.

The general area is already heavily developed from road construction, mining and timber harvest activities. Water quality and soils have been impacted within these watersheds due to wildfires, roads, mining and timber harvest.

The proposed action is unlikely to cause substantial additional impacts to water quality from sediment in Grouse Creek due to both the long slope distance away from live water, and the relatively small area of watershed disturbance.

B. Water Resources, Including Water Quality
Since the proposed action does not cross any side drainages, the primary potential for impact to water quality would be overland transport of sediment down slope into the streams. Due to slope distances and the vegetated buffer between the proposed ROW and Grouse Creek, sediment transport efficiency to the creek would be very limited. The new road segment is quite small relative to the contributing drainage area of the stream. The proposed action would, therefore, have no measurable effects on water quantity or quality in Grouse Creek.

C. Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species

Vegetation Communities. Construction, use and/or maintenance of the road segments would disturb existing vegetation and associated soil resources. Pulling-back and revegetating the new road segment at the conclusion of harvest activities would reduce future impacts to vegetation from unauthorized vehicle use of the road.

Threatened and Endangered/Candidate/BLM Sensitive Plant Species. The proposed action would not affect water howellia, Spalding's catchfly, clustered lady's-slipper, other moonwort species, or bank monkeyflower, and should not contribute to the need to list any of these Sensitive species as Threatened or Endangered. Therefore, BLM will not ask for technical assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Invasive, Non-native Species. Weeds may outcompete and displace desirable vegetation, altering plant community composition, structure, and function both in the present and future. As a result of road-building disturbance, road use, and maintenance, noxious weeds could invade or spread further into native plant communities and soils on BLM land. However, treatment and monitoring of weed infestations would reduce potential impacts to site vegetation. Also, pulling-back and revegetating the new road at the conclusion of harvest activities would reduce future impacts to vegetation from unauthorized vehicle use, especially weed introduction.

No Action Alternative

Onsite vegetation would not be disturbed. The threat of weeds being transported onsite due to construction, road use, and maintenance associated with the proposed action would not occur. However, present weed infestations would continue to exist in the action area.

Cumulative Effects

The analysis area is the Grouse Gulch drainage. Road building, use, and maintenance; mining; past fire activity; and timber harvest have created a mosaic of vegetation in various stages of succession in the analysis area. Recent timber harvest on private land has returned vegetation to an early successional stage. Potential future timber harvest on private lands would contribute more acreage to the early successional category. Due to the anticipated small amount of disturbance from the proposed action (slightly more than one acre), it is not likely to contribute cumulative effects to vegetation communities, special status plant species, or invasive, non-native species in the analysis area.

D. Fisheries

The location of the proposed new temporary road and the sections of existing road to be used on BLM land are located near the ridgetop and do not cross any perennial or intermittent streams. The likelihood of any sediment from road construction or use moving into an area inhabited by fish is extremely low during the 2 years the ROW would be active. In addition,

the new road segment on BLM land would be closed following the 2 year period of use, further minimizing any sediment movement. The proposed action is unlikely to have impacts on any fish or their habitat within Grouse Gulch or the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River.

E. Wildlife
The removal of vegetation along 528 feet of new road should not affect the local wildlife, including migratory birds, which may inhabit the BLM public lands.

Additional roads, however, would affect deer and elk. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has learned that (1) elk in roaded habitats are more than twice as likely to be killed by a hunter than those in unroaded areas; (2) selective road closures help reduce the number of bull elk taken and allowed longer hunting seasons; (3) the number of hunters in an area is often directly related to the number of roads; and (4) with more roads (i.e. easy access) and more hunters in an area, more elk are taken, resulting in lower bull:calf ratios and fewer mature bulls.

F. Threatened, Endangered, and other Special Status Species
The proposed action should not affect any threatened or endangered wildlife species because they are not likely to inhabit the area.

The proposed action should not contribute to the need to list any sensitive, watch, or state-listed species as threatened or endangered because the newly constructed roadbed would be pulled back to slope and revegetated upon expiration of this ROW.

H. Cultural Resources
No known cultural resources would be impacted by this project.

I. Visual Resources
The new spur road would not significantly affect the visual character of the landscape.

J. Recreation
No significant impacts to recreational resources are anticipated from the proposed action.

Mitigation and Residual Effects

Pulling the newly constructed roadbed back to slope upon expiration of this ROW would mitigate these impacts to deer and elk.

VI. Consultation and Coordination

Tom Davis, Alice Consolidated Authorized Agent

VII. List of Preparers

_____	_____
Janna Paronto, Realty Specialist: Project Lead	Date
_____	_____
Cynthia Weston, Fisheries Biologist: Fisheries	Date
_____	_____
Scott Robinson, Wildlife Biologist: Wildlife, T & E Wildlife	Date
_____	_____
Mike Stevenson, Hydrologist: Soils and Water Resources	Date
_____	_____
Brian White, Recreation Planner: Recreation and Visual Resources	Date
_____	_____
David Sisson, Archeologist: Cultural Resources	Date
_____	_____
LeAnn Abell, Botanist: Vegetation, T & E Plants NEPA Review	Date